

Press release

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Koelnmesse continues its successful course – 2017 promises to be another record year

Transformation into the trade fair company of the future: Investments without any old debts

In 2016 Koelnmesse continued its sustained boom with the best even-numbered year in its history. At €274.0 million, the turnover of the Koelnmesse consolidated companies was €17 million higher than planned. The loss of €0.9 million is much lower than the €17 million that had been forecast. Moreover, it is expected to be the last loss for the foreseeable future. Koelnmesse’s successful development is also confirmed by the forecast for 2017. “We want to achieve a turnover of over €320 million in the current fiscal year and thus do even better than in the record-breaking year of 2015,” says Koelnmesse CEO Gerald Böse. “There is a continuous stream of good news coming from Koelnmesse. As the Mayor of Cologne and the Chairwoman of the Supervisory Board, I’m delighted by this development, because it will enable Koelnmesse to continue its activities promoting Cologne as a trade fair and business location,” says Henriette Reker.

Koelnmesse continues to grow and stay sustainably profitable. The average turnover of the Koelnmesse consolidated companies for the last two four-year periods has increased by around 19 per cent, from approximately €232 million between 2009 and 2012 to €277 million between 2013 and 2016. Moreover, this growth is expected to continue. If the economy develops as expected, the Koelnmesse consolidated companies’ turnover is forecast to rise to €329 million and earnings to grow to €19.8 million during the current fiscal year. Koelnmesse expects to make a profit every year in the foreseeable future and to post a turnover of well over €300 million on a sustained basis.

The stable economic situation serves as an important basis for further investments. In 2016 Koelnmesse also paid back all of the loans that it had taken out in recent years. “This frees us up to make new investments in the exhibition grounds and the infrastructure, the digitalization of the halls and the services, the internationalization of the portfolio and the further development of our events,” says Böse. Now that it no longer has any old debts to pay off, Koelnmesse can forge ahead with its transformation into the trade fair company of the future and remain one of the world’s top ten companies in the trade fair business.

In 2016, over 35,500 exhibiting firms from 102 countries participated in 73 trade fairs and exhibitions, which were attended by more than 2.3 million visitors from 190 countries. A total of 25 events for which Koelnmesse is responsible, 20 guest events and one special event took place in Cologne, and 27 trade fairs were held abroad.

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Trade fairs and events grew at above-average rates

The good results in 2016 were in large part due to the outstanding development of numerous events in Cologne for which Koelnmesse is responsible. This development is measured in terms of the three key trade fair parameters – exhibitor numbers, visitor numbers and stand space. Compared to the respective events of the previous year, the number of exhibiting companies rose in particular at INTERMOT Cologne (+20.4 per cent), dmexco (+14.3 per cent) and ORGATEC (+7.1 per cent). Strong growth in visitor numbers as compared to the respective events of the previous year was recorded by dmexco (+16.4 per cent), ORGATEC (+7.5 per cent) and spoga+gafa/spoga horse (autumn) (+7.9 per cent). The total stand area grew substantially at dmexco (+15.3 per cent), ORGATEC (+13.5 per cent), spoga horse (autumn) (+6.8 per cent), ProSweets Cologne (+3.6 per cent), and other events. The turnover of the Koelnmesse events increased by over six per cent compared to the respective preceding events. Individual trade fairs such as dmexco and ORGATEC have even posted double-digit growth rates for their turnover.

The events and guest events managed by the subsidiary Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH also contributed considerably to the planned turnover of the Koelnmesse consolidated companies. According to the organizers, more than 6,200 exhibitors and over 366,700 visitors took part in 20 guest events and one special event in Cologne in 2016. Koelnmesse Ausstellungen GmbH posted turnover of €14.5 million, which was about €2.5 million higher than planned. Before profits were transferred, the subsidiary had a surplus of €6.3 million, or about €2.1 million more than expected. “This demonstrates once again how much the organizers of guest events appreciate our high-quality exhibition centre and its optimal location close to the downtown area,” says Böse.

International business achieved its turnover target

Koelnmesse’s long-term internationalization strategy continues to be successful. On account of the trade fair schedule, business was stronger outside of Germany in 2016 than in 2015, generating a pre-consolidation turnover of €38.1 million (2015: €22.5 million). As a result, business activities outside Germany accounted for 14 per cent of total turnover, which is within the strategic target range of between 12 and 15 per cent. In 2016 Koelnmesse continued to intensify its activities in South America in particular. In cooperation with Fiere di Parma, Koelnmesse established Koeln Parma Exhibitions S.r.l. to sustainably solidify its market-leading position in the food technology sector. In 2016, four events celebrated their premieres outside Germany: the Dairy Industry Conference in India, Pueri Expo in Brazil, Alimentec in Colombia and Cibus Tec in Italy. Celebrating their premieres this year will be ProFood Tech in the USA and the WellFood Summit in Brazil.

New area of expertise: Digital Media, Entertainment and Mobility

In 2016 Koelnmesse established another global area of expertise, Digital Media, Entertainment and Mobility, to showcase these future-oriented topics. The new field complements the strategic pillars Global Competence in Food and FoodTec as well as Global Competence in Furniture, Interiors and Design. “These areas of expertise clearly position us vis-à-vis our customers and the public in Germany and abroad,”

says Böse. The new competence field encompasses the events gamescom, dmexco, photokina, INTERMOT Cologne, THE TIRE COLOGNE and DIGILITY.

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First new construction measure of the Koelnmesse 3.0 investment programme

Through the Koelnmesse 3.0 investment programme, the company will create the world's most attractive downtown exhibition centre by 2030 in order to continue providing its customers with an appropriate setting for trade fairs, congresses and other events in the future. In 2016 the focus was on the construction of the new Zoobrücke car park, which will offer around 3,260 parking spaces. The first section of the car park, encompassing 2,000 parking spaces, is scheduled to be opened in autumn 2017. This section will already be directly connected to Cologne's Zoobrücke bridge in order to reduce the amount of traffic in the vicinity of the exhibition centre. At the end of March 2016 Koelnmesse presented the winning design for the new buildings, which had been submitted by the Cologne architecture firm JSWD. The plans for Hall 1plus, Confex® and the Terminal have been made more concrete since then. Moreover, important maintenance work has begun, involving the modernization of various technical facilities such as the installation of a new sprinkler system in Hall 10.

Digital strategy forges ahead

Koelnmesse is exploiting the opportunities and potential of digitalization for its business and is making itself fit for the digital future. The company's activities in this field focus on the development of new digital business models and services. A notable example of that was the launch of the ambista B2B platform for the furniture sector at imm cologne in January 2017. ambista provides the trade fair market with an innovative service that combines content with relationship management. Koelnmesse is also continuing to digitalize its exhibition centre. Examples include advertising formats for future digital signage and the installation of future-oriented technical systems for the provision of new WiFi-based services in the trade fair halls. Koelnmesse is also introducing new hardware and software in order to optimize its processes, promote networking and boost knowledge management. To this end, Koelnmesse replaced all of the PC workstations in the Administrative Building (Messehochhaus) with mobile Microsoft Surface devices in mid-2016.

You can find photos by clicking on the following link:

<http://www.koelnmesse.com/Koelnmesse/Press/Image-Database/Koelnmesse/index.php>